

Meeting of 2011-1-31 Regular Meeting

MINUTES
LAWTON CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
JANUARY 31, 2011 6:00 P.M.
WAYNE GILLEY CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER

Mayor Fred L. Fitch Also Present:
Presiding Larry Mitchell, City Manager
 Frank V. Jensen, City Attorney
 Traci Hushbeck, City Clerk
COL Fred Erst, Fort Sill Liaison

Mayor Fitch called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Notice of meeting and agenda were posted on the City Hall notice board as required by law.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Bill Shoemate, Ward One
Michael Tennis, Ward Two
Janice Drewry, Ward Three
Jay Burk, Ward Four
Richard Zarle, Ward Six
Stanley Haywood, Ward Seven
 Doug Wells, Ward Eight

ABSENT: Robert Shanklin, Ward Five

BUSINESS ITEM:

1. Continue the public hearing and when appropriate, adopt an ordinance closing, vacating, and discontinuing certain streets, easements, and other rights-of-way in portions of North Addition and Vernon Addition located in the Downtown Redevelopment Project area. Exhibits: Ordinance No. 11-____ and Location Map.

Mayor Fitch stated there was still some confusion and misunderstanding after a prior meeting with those affected in the area. He stated this item was tabled from the last meeting and a group met on Saturday which included Council members Tennis, Wells, Haywood, Albert Johnson, Sr., Pastor Logan, Ms. Fitzgerald, Ms. McGahee and Ms. Monts. He stated a revised site plan has been submitted by the developer and now Dearborn will be another passage way through and will be a permanent utility easement. Nothing will be built on that easement and there will be a concrete drive area between the buildings. Bell Avenue will continue to be a thru street from 2nd Street to L.K. Jones Avenue. He stated Railroad Street will go north from Arlington and will go all the way up behind the entire project and that entire area will be concrete all the way up to the buildings. Freight trucks will be able to come in and out. It will be six inch concrete and will be access for fire and safety equipment, and it will also be an area where residents can drive. He stated the elevation will be raised where Ferris curves so there will be no more flooding in that area. He stated he feels that when everyone met everyone agreed that this was satisfactory. There will be no vote tonight because the Dearborn utility corridor will be permanently closed by the Lawton Urban Renewal Authority (LURA) at a later date. This ordinance will come before the City Council at the next meeting. He questioned if the council members had any comments.

Zarle stated he has spoken with the City Manager about the issue and it is acceptable to him.

Haywood stated the Patterson Neighborhood Association accept this revision.

Shoemate stated he approves of this option.

Tennis stated the meeting on Saturday was very constructive and it is acceptable to those he spoke with as well as himself.

Drewry stated she is excited that the changes were made and it will be good for everyone.

Burk stated he agrees.

Wells stated he felt the meeting was very productive and the residents seem to be satisfied.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

Pastor Michael Logan, Galilee Missionary Baptist Church, thanked the Council for the interest they have shown by sitting down with the residents to address these issues. He stated the public access easement is going to come from Gore to Bell, from Bell to 2nd Street, and he questioned what will keep Bell to Ferris from being public access instead of being given to developers as a private road.

Mitchell stated Dearborn will be a utility corridor and will be a permanent easement to locate utilities which, by definition, cannot be closed because you will have to access those utilities for services. In the area of Railroad and Bell, that corridor is not necessarily a utility corridor. Without have the public access easement overlay there could be the potential of having a portion of Bell being closed without the public access easement.

Mayor Fitch stated Bell is not a utility corridor like Dearborn.

Pastor Logan stated that he wanted to clarify that 20 years down the road, no one will be able to come back and say that there is too much traffic and that it will not be public access but only open to utility or emergency vehicles.

Mayor Fitch stated the correct verbiage is a permanent utility easement and that means it is permanent and will be filed with the property.

Pastor Logan stated for clarification purposes, that is from Dearborn to Ferris to 2nd Street.

Mayor Fitch stated Dearborn up Railroad to Ferris to 2nd Street. That will remain open at all times. If they wanted to close that they would have to come back to LURA and ask for a revocable permit and it would have to be approved by the City Council. This has to remain open for clear passage around the building.

An unidentified resident stated she does not know why they would want to close Railroad, they need an access road.

Mayor Fitch stated Railroad will still have public access for the area.

Mitchell stated instead of using the word closed they are basically transferring the rights on Railroad from a public street to a private street. The developer would not be able to close Railroad because there has to be a way to provide public safety and fire access to all of the businesses and also the store owners need a service road in order to bring products to their stores. There is no reason he can think of that would make the developer want to close that street.

Mayor Fitch stated the developers want as many access roads into the property as possible. He stated there has been approximately \$150,000 worth of overlay on L.K. Jones, Carver and Main.

An unidentified resident questioned what would be done about the traffic on Carver.

Mayor Fitch stated he has heard complaints about truck traffic on Carver and he stated there will be signs stating no truck through traffic. He feels that a lot of the traffic build up in that area was a result of the construction on I-44 which now is completed. With traffic counts they are not seeing the numbers they saw before.

Shoemate questioned how they will deal with school buses and delivery trucks.

Mayor Fitch stated Fed Ex and UPS will have access through the neighborhoods. He stated they do not have school bus service in that area.

An unidentified resident questioned if all of the streets will be the same width.

Mayor Fitch stated yes if not wider. Some areas could be 75 feet wide and it will all be heavy concrete.

Haywood stated elementary buses continue to go to this area.

Pastor Logan stated they did discuss the possibility of putting in greenery that would block the vision of the back of the buildings.

Mayor Fitch stated the back of the buildings will be cut stone and there will be a landscape ordinance in place that will require a certain percentage of the cost of the project to be spent on landscaping. There will be a greenbelt area on the eastern side of Railroad Street.

Pastor Logan questioned if the developer would be responsible for maintaining the beauty of this area.

Mitchell stated it may be city easements. They are negotiating with the Union Pacific Railroad for right of way and if they are successful they plan to convert a 100 foot strip of right of way into trails and bike paths which will include landscaping.

An unidentified resident questioned if there will be sidewalks.

Mayor Fitch stated there is a need for sidewalks all over this community. That is another project for another day. He stated they are looking at grants to put in sidewalks where they have not been put in.

An unidentified resident questioned if there will be a traffic light at Gore by Douglass School.

Mayor Fitch stated a study will be done and they will try to put an allotment of funds in the 2012 CIP for this project. He knows there is a problem at the school early in the morning and in the afternoon.

Gwen Jackson questioned if the speed limits would remain the same or will there be multiple speed bumps on Railroad Street.

Mayor Fitch stated he did not know if they will install speed bumps or not, but no one will be able to drive fast through the area. He stated it will probably be in the 25 mph range.

Haywood thanked the Patterson Neighborhood Association, members of Galilee Missionary Baptist Church and the Mayor, Council members and staff for working through this issue.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

There being no further business to consider, the meeting adjourned at 6:29 p.m. upon motion, second and roll call vote.

/s/ Fred L. Fitch
FRED L. FITCH, MAYOR
ATTEST:

/s/ Traci L. Hushbeck
TRACI HUSHBECK, CITY CLERK